UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council, in Presidential statement on Friday, expresses concern at reports of intensified military operations in Angola; reiterates demand for immediate cease-fire, citing threat to Lusaka peace process.

- Security Council welcomes Agreed Framework between United States and Democratic People's Republic of Korea; notes decision by Democratic People's Republic to remain party to Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to comply with Safeguards Agreement.

- Secretary-General, in Geneva, meets with President of former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; discusses situation in former Yugoslavia with senior United Nations officials.

- International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia charges former camp commander with crimes against humanity and issues warrants for his arrest.

- Fighting decreases around Sarajevo and Bihac after weekend action between Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb forces; UNPROFOR seeks to arrange meeting of military leaders from both sides.

- Member States owe United Nations $2.4 billion as of 31 October; $770 million owed to regular budget and $1.6 billion to peace-keeping.

- Member States should stop micro-managing United Nations, Canada tells Administrative and Budgetary Committee; Nordic countries say procurement system should be improved urgently to save money.

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* Revised to correct entire document, inadvertently reproduced from last week.

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The Security Council has expressed grave concern at reports of intensified military operations in Angola, particularly towards Huambo. In a statement read out by its President, Madeleine Albright (United States), on Friday night, the Council said those operations endangered the lives of Angolan citizens and jeopardized the successful completion of the peace process. It reiterated its demand that the Angolan Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) immediately stop fighting and quickly establish an effective cease-fire.

The Council noted that the leadership of both parties must have adequate opportunity to meet with their negotiating teams to prepare for military talks scheduled to begin on 10 November. It urged the Government to allow flight clearances into Huambo to enable the UNITA team to consult with its leadership.

Stressing again that any obstruction to the peace process would be unacceptable, the Council urged the Government of Angola to exercise its authority to bring an immediate end to the military activities. It called on both parties to honour their commitment made at the Lusaka talks, to exercise maximum restraint, and to refrain from any action that could jeopardize the signing of the Lusaka Protocol on 15 November.

A United Nations spokesman today said that the situation in Angola remained very serious. He noted that there were more than 50 international personnel in Huambo -- most of whom belonged to non-governmental organizations -- and that the Organization had made an unsuccessful attempt to evacuate those who wished to leave.

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In another Presidential statement on Friday night, the Security Council noted with satisfaction the Agreed Framework between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of 21 October, by which the Democratic People's Republic agreed to remain a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Council noted that country's decision to come into full compliance with its Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It also noted with approval the decision by the Democratic People's Republic to freeze its graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities -- a voluntary measure beyond what the Treaty and Safeguards Agreement required.

The Council requested the IAEA to take all steps it might deem necessary as a consequence of the Agreed Framework to monitor the freeze of the specified facilities. It noted that verification activities with respect to such a voluntary measure were within the scope of the Safeguards Agreement, which remained binding and in force. It asked the Agency to take all necessary steps, following consultations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to verify the accuracy and completeness of that country's initial report on its nuclear material, to verify its full compliance with the Agreement.

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The Council also reaffirmed the importance of the Joint Declaration by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Describing the Agreed Framework as a positive step towards denuclearizing the Peninsula and maintaining regional peace and security, it noted that the parties had agreed to cooperate in replacing the graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities with light-water reactor plants; move towards full normalization of political and economic relations; work together for peace and security on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula; and work together to strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation régime.

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Continuing his stay in Geneva, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali this morning addressed the Fourteenth Regional Conference of European United Nations Associations devoted to the theme "Minorities in Europe". He later met with the President of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov. The aim of the meeting, which was attended by Special Envoy Cyrus Vance, was to discuss differences between Greece and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

This afternoon, the Secretary-General met with the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Ilter Turkmen. He also had a meeting with the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Compensation Commission, Carlos Alzamora.

The Secretary-General was later scheduled to meet with senior aides to discuss the situation in the former Yugoslavia. Among those attending that meeting would be the Co-Chairman of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg; Special Representative Yasushi Akashi; the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Marrack Goulding; and the Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), General Bertrand de Sauville de Lapresle. Tomorrow, the Secretary-General will hold a high-level meeting on Rwanda.

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The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia has indicted a former commander of a camp for Muslim detainees in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and issued warrants for his arrest. Dragan Nikolic has been charged with grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, violations of the laws or customs of war, and crimes against humanity. He is said to have been responsible for the killing of eight detainees, the torture or inhuman treatment of several others, and the unlawful deportations of hundreds more.

The International Tribunal has transmitted one warrant to the Bosnian Serb administration in Pale, saying the accused may be living in that area. According to the Tribunal's Rules of Procedure and Evidence, the accused should be transferred to the seat of the Tribunal after his arrest.

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Fighting decreased today around Sarajevo and the Bihac pocket after intense action between Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb forces over the weekend, according to a United Nations spokesman. He noted that the Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, had protested the shelling of the safe area of Bihac from Serb-held territory in Croatia.

Meanwhile, the Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lieutenant-General Michael Rose, has tried unsuccessfully to arrange a meeting between Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb military leaders at Sarajevo airport. However, it is hoped that such a meeting will take place later in the week, the spokesman added.

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As of 31 October, Member States owed the United Nations a total of $2.4 billion, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount, $770 million was for assessments for the regular budget and $1.6 billion was for peace-keeping operations.

The United States -- the largest debtor -- owed $500 million to the regular budget and $397 million to the peace-keeping budget. The Russian Federation owed $28 million to the regular budget and $569 million to peace-keeping.

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Member States should stop micro-managing the United Nations and resist the urge to ask for report after report and budget estimate after budget estimate, the representative of Canada told the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) on Friday. Speaking also for Australia and New Zealand, she said such micro-management would not be necessary after the Secretariat delivered a system of accountability and transparency to ensure that Member's interests were served. She made those comments as the Committee discussed the review of United Nations efficiency and considered financial statements and reports of the Board of Auditors.

The representative of Sweden, speaking for the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland), said the United Nations procurement system should be improved urgently to save money. As major contributors, the Nordic countries were concerned by the Board's observations on shortcomings in programme and project management in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). They would take up the matter with those organizations' governing bodies.

The representative of India said the procurement policy and practices should be reviewed by a group of experts invited by the Secretariat. Irregularities in the hiring and use of consultants, especially for peace-keeping, must be reduced.

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